

Compensation of Houston police in specialized divisions
(SB 144 by Green/Barton)

DIGEST: SB 144 would have required that Houston peace officers employed in specialized police divisions receive the same compensation and benefits as their counterparts of equal rank and longevity in a regular police division.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

This is a local issue. While park police, airport police, and municipal marshals undoubtedly serve a very valuable function for the city, the Legislature should not mandate what the city of Houston pays its peace officers.

RESPONSE: Sen. Gene Green, the author of SB 144, said: "Although the issue of compensation of municipal police officers may be a local issue, the Legislature is often put into the position of getting involved in local matters because of inaction on the part of the local government. Current law provides that airport police are subject to civil service statutes and should be paid in accordance with their duties. A recent court case in Houston determined that airport police perform essentially the same functions as city police. However, the City of Houston has refused to pay its specialized police at a rate equal to that of officers in the regular city police department. In vetoing this bill, the governor may have been responding to pressure from the city, which does not want to have to shell out the additional money for fair salaries for its officers."

NOTES: The House Research Organization analysis of SB 144 appeared in Part Two of the May 23, 1989 Daily Floor Report.